

1890.
NEW ZEALAND.

THE DAIRY INDUSTRY OF NEW ZEALAND

(REPORT ON), BY MR. JOHN SAWERS, DAIRY INSTRUCTOR.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

Mr. JOHN SAWERS, Government Dairy Instructor, to the Hon. the MINISTER of LANDS, Wellington.

SIR,—

I have the honour, in accordance with your desire, to submit the following report regarding the performance of my duties since I was appointed Dairy Instructor eight months ago. At the outset I should put in the foreground that it has no pretensions whatever as a literary production, but that it is the work of one who is more at home in a dairy factory than in drawing up a report of this kind, especially with no similar report to guide him either as to its matter, manner, or length.

My services having been granted to the Commissioners, my first duties were in connection with the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition. On the 14th October, 1889, I began to superintend the placing of the necessary machinery and plant in the Exhibition buildings to enable me to carry on my work, which was to lecture and give practical demonstration in the art of cheese- and butter-making. Not being constantly engaged at the Exhibition, I during my spare time visited and gave practical instruction in the districts in the vicinity of Dunedin. The first district visited was the Peninsula. There being no factory system in that part, it was necessary, in order that settlers might get the greatest possible benefit from my instruction, to call them together at various centres. With this object in view, some of the leading farmers of the district took the matter up, giving notice at the various public schools, and by conspicuous posters, of days I would visit certain dairies in the neighbourhood, and requesting all interested to attend. By this means I came in contact with most of the producers of dairy-produce in the districts visited, who carefully watched my operations and attentively listened to my instructions, besides asking questions, of which there were usually a good many. The first of these meetings was held in the Highcliff Volunteer Hall, where milk and the necessary appliances were brought for the manufacture of both butter and cheese. After going through the practical part of my work, I here delivered my first lecture on the subject of butter-manufacture, to a company of about a hundred. Several other meetings were held in different parts of this district, all being well attended; indeed, wherever I went I observed there was a very keen interest taken in my proceedings, and a strong desire shown to learn everything pertaining to the manufacture of either cheese or butter. This method of imparting instruction, not only in this section of the colony, but in several other districts visited by me where no factory system prevailed, afforded me a continuous source of information as in the diversity of opinion existing in the minds of the rival makers regarding the manufacture of dairy-produce, and provided me with a good general view of the system of "Every man his own maker." It also convinced me of the benefits derivable from the adoption of a factory system; for, in a company of, say, thirty makers, I could reckon on at least as many different qualities of product being made, if each maker could have his own way. Here, in the Otago Peninsula district, dairying is made a specialty, and is the staple industry of the community. Being in such proximity to the City of Dunedin, naturally by far the greater portion of its products finds its way into that market; but during the flush of the season a glut always takes place, with a consequent heavy fall in the price. In order to keep a superabundance of that product from flooding the market and hence lowering the price, the farmers of this district have established a packing-house, the only one to my knowledge either in Otago or Southland. This institution is wrought on a purely co-operative basis, the products of only shareholders being admissible. Previously to my visit the practice in force was to receive butter only one day a week, the greater portion of the butter being brought not in its granulated state, but in lumps. However, upon my first visit I offered, and have since continued to offer, a constant complaint against the system, because I could learn from the individual makers that the general system in vogue was to churn weekly, a practice too common among the individual makers in New Zealand. In fact, I never yet saw a good sample of butter produced from such cream. Three days is long enough to keep cream before churning, and only then under a very low temperature. In order to insure a more systematic mode of manufacture, I recommended to the managing committee and shareholders that it be made compulsory for each